

232 the best are kept for reproduction, but the others are sold, killed, or placed in ordinary herds. The meat of slaughtered bulls and that of dead cows is eaten or sold by the guardians.

Castration does not exist; it is even forbidden by customary law.

527  
231 The Inyambo are led to the Mwami at festival time and at public rejoicings. They are escorted by the Mututsi, with whom they are boarded, and by [94] their guardians. For the occasion, the finest animal (inyamibwa) wears on its forehead an ornament of beads (amaraba), at the base of each of its horns three strings of beads (amashyongoshyc), and on the tips, tufts of banana fiber (amakamba); a strap covered with black and red beads goes round its neck; finally tufts of palm fiber called ubuhivu are fastened to the end of its tail. Six cows wear an ornament of white beads (inigi) between their horns and necks. Two others have two inigi and a bead collar longer than the inigi called iniheja. Finally the rest of the Inyambo simply have a tuft of fibers on their tails.

When they arrive at Nyanza, the Inyambo file before the Mwami while their escorts utter joyful cries (urwamu), wave sticks (guchyar'inka, lit., to make the cattle go in) and praise the good qualities of the Inyambo. Then they line the Inyambo up (kumulika Inyambo, lit., to show off the Inyambo) and renew their praises.

The intore pages then group themselves and dance in front of the herd (kwinikiza). The festival ends with libations of banana beer offered by the Mwami to all who have participated in the presentation of the Inyambo. If the Mwami is satisfied with the treatment of the Inyambo, he gives some ingororano to the chief of the province in which the herd is living and also to the chief's people.

## 8. Death of the King

643  
763 When the Mwami feels his end is approaching, he calls to his side his stewards (abanyagikari), notables (abatoni) of whom he is particularly fond, and some guardians of the customs (abiru). He tells them his last wishes and reminds them of the name of the successor he has chosen. [95]

128

Among those customs, let us mention the preservation and upkeep of a dog-faced baboon at the capital, the watch over the sacred fire bequeathed by one of the dynastic forebears, the worship of the royal drum which is regarded as the "palladium" of the realm, the existence of sacred cows and their presentation at important ceremonies, the yearly celebration of the festival called the "first-fruits festival," and the observance of a day of rest every five days. No less interesting, from an ethnological standpoint, are the passages describing the funeral customs observed at the death of a king and those referring to cemeteries, royal groves, and the royal ancestral spirits, including the annual June mourning observed at court in memory of an ancient prince. The reader will hear of the special franchises and immunities accorded to certain tribes, and of the prerogatives, privileges, and varied duties of the other groups. Some of those large families have /354/ the special function of supplying His Black Majesty with sorcerers, keepers of the traditions, rain makers, royal undertakers (who form a closed corporation), etc. (1). In order

500

1. The political and social organization of the Banyarwanda is slightly reminiscent of the caste system which is found in the early history of many groups, whether political, religious, or even mere professional castes are involved.

Thus among the Hebrews, the tribe of Levi had a monopoly on sacerdotal functions. Among the Greeks the Asclepiades, who claimed to descend from Aesculapius, transmitted the secrets of medicine to one another from generation to generation. In Rome there were the two great political castes of patricians and plebeians. Even at the present

769 d. The cult of Kibogo and the observance of a day of rest.  
773 As for Kibogo, a brother of Ruganzu II and son of King Ndahiro, although he never ascended the throne, he is honored in a special way owing to his role as Liberator. It will be recalled that he was appointed by the diviners to save the land and bring a drought to a close. He was taken to the sky and wrapped in a cloud, and his ascension had fortunate consequences for Ruanda. Each newly elected prince builds him a separate dwelling outside the royal enclosure, so that Kibogo will truly be "at home." The hut consecrated to him is surrounded by a large and beautiful courtyard. A woman lives there and cares with her servants for the traditional herd of cows assigned to the purely theoretical "needs" of the spirits.

769 The present monarch complied with this custom by building him a home, as his predecessors did, /537/ which is altogether separate from the other dwellings and which is still designated by the name of "Kibogo's place." He even has a special drum, which emphasizes further the importance of the role he played in the past.

527 The Kibogo episode is connected with a curious practice which is still observed today in some provinces. It consists of stopping work in the fields once every five days, but in the morning only. This practice gave rise to the well-known word chumweru, which contains the meaning of "white" and "whiteness" and which the Christians have adopted now to designate Sunday.

On what occasion and at what time did the Banyarwanda choose this day? Some trace the custom back to Gihanga the Creator. It is not unusual, indeed, to hear on the lips of pagans the expression Chumweru cha Gihanga, "Gihanga's white day."

Others say that Chumweru was a man in Kibogo's retinue. He belonged to the Basindi clan, they add, and he lived at Ruhina, not far from the present Kabgayi mission. He was in the service of Kibogo and watched over his crops (guhingishiriza). He went along with his master on the day of his "ascension," carrying around his neck the small bag (uruhago) of banana-tree fiber which contained his chief's pipe and tobacco.

The cloud seized them all together.

527 As we can see, the origins of this practice are obscure. Could  
a trace of the Sabbath or Sunday be involved here?

The hypothesis would be fairly plausible, especially if one  
supposes that the Batutsi originally came from Egypt or Abyssinia.

Whatever may have been the origin of this practice, it used  
to be strictly observed. Many pagans who live far from European  
settlements still observe it today. Like their ancestors, /538/ they  
[82] lend it a superstitious meaning. If hail should fall on that day, they  
would not fail to attribute it to a supernatural punishment and to place  
the responsibility on those who were caught breaking the rule. "One  
didn't hesitate," the elders relate, "to insult the delinquents, to  
rob them or even to strike them if need be, and it was not unusual  
to be taken to task, so highly was this custom regarded."

769 The great chiefs also do for the dead members of their  
families, proportionately speaking, what the king does for his own  
ancestors (1). Each of the huts which make up their homes, for usually

764 1. The Bega preferably take  
their dead to the Budaha region,  
which is one of their fees. The  
regent Kabale and one of his  
favorite wives, Kirumwero, were  
buried in the village of Ngoma,  
near Gatara hill. His father  
Lwagara had been buried at  
Gisunzu, not far from Munzanga,  
and his brother Lwibishengo at  
Nyamutukura. His son Nyantabana  
and one of his grandsons were interred  
at Lwasankuba.

The Banyiginya choose their  
burial sites in enemy country to  
check invasions and to wreak evil  
on foreigners (Abanyamuhanga).

Before it was joined to the Crown,  
the isle of Idjwi served as a final